

**Statement of
Joseph Y. Yun
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State**

Before the

**House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment**

September 22, 2010

The Status of Papua, Indonesia

Chairman Faleomavaega, Mr. Manzullo, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on the situation in Papua.

U.S. Policy

Developments affecting Papua, which includes the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua, are closely followed by the Department of State and represent an important aspect of our overall relations with Indonesia. The United States recognizes and respects the territorial integrity of Indonesia within its current borders and does not support or condone separatism in Papua, or in any other part of the country. At the same time, we strongly support respect for universal human rights within Indonesia, including the right of peaceful assembly, free expression of political views, and the fair and non-discriminatory treatment of ethnic Papuans within Indonesia.

Within this context, we have consistently encouraged the Indonesian government to work with the indigenous Papuan population to address their grievances, resolve conflicts peacefully, and support development and good governance in the Papuan provinces. The Administration believes the full implementation of the 2001 Special Autonomy Law for Papua, which emerged as part of Indonesia's democratic transition, would help resolve long-standing grievances. We continue to encourage the Indonesian government to work with Papuan authorities to discuss ways to empower Papuans and further implement the Special Autonomy provisions, which grant greater authority to Papuans to administer their own affairs.

Human Rights

Advancing human rights is one of our primary foreign policy objectives not only in Indonesia, but also throughout the world. We believe that respect for human rights helps to strengthen democracy. We want to see the right of peaceful, free expression of political views and freedom of association observed throughout the world, including in Papua.

We monitor allegations of human rights violations in Papua and West Papua, and we report on them in the annual Country Report on Human Rights. With the growth of democracy over the past decade in Indonesia, there has been substantial improvement in respect for human rights, although there remain credible concerns about human rights violations. The improvement includes Papua, although, as our annual reporting has documented, there continues to be some credible allegations of abuse. We regularly engage the Government of Indonesia on the importance of respect for human rights by security forces, and we continue to emphasize our strong support for an open and transparent legal system to look into any claims of excessive use of force. We also urge them to increase accountability for past human rights abuses. We deplore violence committed by armed groups, including in Papua, against civilians and government security forces.

It is critical that independent and objective observers have unrestricted access to Papua in order to monitor developments. At present, Indonesian journalists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and Indonesian citizens may travel freely to Papua and West Papua. However, the Indonesian government requires that foreign journalists, NGOs, diplomats, and parliamentarians obtain permission to visit Papua. We continue to encourage the Indonesian government to give these groups, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, full and unfettered access to Papua and West Papua.

Papuans are Indonesian citizens and are free to travel to other parts of Indonesia.

Demographic Shifts

Migration from other parts of Indonesia has increased the number of non-Papuan residents to about 40 percent of the current population in Papua and

West Papua. The total population of both provinces is 2.4 million, of which 900,000 are migrants. Past government-sponsored transmigration programs, which moved households from more densely populated areas to less populated regions, account for part of the influx. The majority of the population shift has resulted from natural migration trends from Indonesia's large population centers to Papua where there is relatively low population density. Some Papuans have voiced concerns that the migrants have interfered with their traditional ways of life, land usage, and economic opportunities.

Economic Development

Although the region is rich in natural resources, including gold, copper, natural gas, and timber, Papua lags behind other parts of Indonesia in some key development indicators. Poverty is widespread in Papua and Papua has the lowest level of adult literacy in Indonesia at 74 percent. The region also has a disproportionately high number of HIV/AIDS cases compared with the rest of Indonesia and high rates of infant and maternal mortality.

According to the World Bank, the two greatest challenges to economic development are Papua's topography and climate—great distances between towns, steep mountains, swampy lowlands, fragile soils, and heavy seasonal rainfall—and its social structure—low population density and cultural fragmentation.

Special Autonomy

Indonesia's parliament in 2001 granted Special Autonomy to Papua, which, along with Aceh, was one of the two areas in Indonesia that harbored high-profile separatist movements. This law devolved to provincial and local authorities all government functions outside of five national competencies; defense, foreign affairs, religious affairs, justice, and monetary/fiscal policy.

The Special Autonomy Law has not been fully implemented in Papua. Implementation has been delayed due to lack of implementing regulations. In addition, the provincial governments have lacked the capacity to take on certain key responsibilities and some central government ministries have yet to cede their authorities. Although full implementation of Special Autonomy has not yet been realized, Indonesian government officials point to increased funding to Papua, which has totaled Rp 27 trillion or approximately US\$3

billion in the past nine years, higher per capita than any other area in Indonesia. The Special Autonomy Law created the Papuan People's Council (MRP) to protect Papuan culture. Recently, the MRP rejected Special Autonomy, symbolically handing Special Autonomy back to Indonesian authorities. This action had no practical legal effect, but it did highlight the need for increased dialogue between Papua and Jakarta to resolve the region's outstanding differences.

We continue to encourage the Indonesian government and the provincial governments of Papua and West Papua to fully implement the Special Autonomy Law. This would include the promulgation of implementing regulations for all provisions of the law, central government action to ensure that provincial or local laws take precedence in areas of delegated authority, and actions to increase the capacity for development and good governance. We believe that full implementation would help to address Papuans' grievances against the central government. Dialogue between central authorities and the indigenous Papuan population could facilitate full implementation of Special Autonomy, and result in actions that would support development and boost good governance in Papua.

U.S. Assistance

The United States is working in partnership with the government of Indonesia and the provincial governments of Papua and West Papua to find ways to address the key developmental challenges of Papua, including increasing good governance, access to quality healthcare and education, and protecting the environment. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) implements programs in Papua to foster improvements in these sectors with activities that total \$11.6 million, or 7 percent of USAID's budget for Indonesia for fiscal year 2010.

In addition to USAID programs, the Department of State also brings Papuans to the United States for thematic engagement on issues such as resource distribution. Our Fulbright programs have had over 22 grantees from Papua. We also partner with the private sector to leverage resources. For example, in a public-private partnership, the Fulbright-Freeport Scholarship Program has funded 18 individuals from Papua for study in the United States.

Embassy Jakarta maintains a vigorous schedule of engagement with Papua and West Papua. U.S. Mission officers routinely travel to the provinces. Ambassador Marciel, who arrived at post in mid-August, plans to travel to Papua soon after he presents his credentials to the Indonesian government. Officers maintain a wide base of contacts concerning Papua, including central and provincial government officials, human rights activists, military and police personnel, traditional and religious leaders, and NGO staff. In addition to official meetings, Embassy officers conduct regular public outreach in Papua and West Papua.

Conclusion

In closing, I would like to emphasize that Papua plays an important role in our sustained engagement with the Government of Indonesia. While Indonesia's overall human rights situation has improved along with the country's rapid democratic development, we are concerned by allegations of human rights violations in Papua and continuously monitor the situation there. We urge increased dialogue between the central government and Papuan leaders and the full implementation of the Special Autonomy Law. We will continue to provide assistance to build a strong economic and social foundation in Papua.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today. I am pleased to answer your questions.